

ENIGMA

PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

A CASE STUDY:

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EDINA

EDiNA Case study

In February 2020 Enigma People Solutions was approached by EDiNA to help them source a Head of Operations. As part of a leadership team of 4 this role is designed to lead the engineering side of the business delivering world-class national online services to the UK academic community and innovative new projects, expanding into a range of commercial sectors.



Description of EDiNA

EDiNA is a world-class centre for data and digital expertise, developing and delivering digital products including large-scale online services, mobile apps and digital tools for education. Their expertise includes geospatial and satellite data, computational learning, text and data mining, e-preservation and machine learning. The aim is for EDiNA and Edinburgh University (a £1.3 billion turnover organisation that acts as a parent company to EDiNA) to replicate some of the commercial opportunities in the way that universities like Stanford in the US do.

EDiNA sees significant opportunities within the space and micro-satellite market. This fast-moving and constantly evolving market is lead by the UK in terms of investor funding c£9billion.

The team at EDiNA is highly skilled and very technically capable. The Head of Operations role will be required to help the team meet the great opportunities presented to the business.



The brief:

EDiNA demonstrated an astute understanding of the importance of developing the right detailed brief. They allowed Enigma to conduct a deep dive into who they were as a company both technically and culturally, how they were evolving, what markets they were pursuing, what skillsets they wanted to be known for and what challenges their development trajectory threw up. EDiNA's unique situation as a not for profit company that was trying to operate in a commercially astute manner whilst delivering the very best of services and solutions to existing and future client groups.

There really was a lot to take in and EDiNA's patience and willingness to allow Enigma to develop a full brief was to prove invaluable to the recruitment process.

The challenge was to find candidates with the technical, managerial, strategic and cultural balances required that were willing to take on the specific set of challenges and journey that EDiNA is embarking on. It was identified that the Head of Operations post holder will need to have the ability to think "Macro", big picture strategy and also focus down on the "Micro" detail of specific projects and technologies.

We distilled the role to 5 key elements that candidates would have to demonstrate strength in:

- Technical problem solving
- Resource management
- Technical systems architecture experience
- Service management and delivery
- Collaborative cultural leadership

The challenge:

The title of Head of Operations ran the risk of attracting people that were significantly beyond the role, possibly people running multi-million pound operations whereas this role was a more “hands-on” but very diverse leadership role within an evolving SME. The breadth of the role was both attractive and problematic – finding people that truly had all the elements required would be challenging.

To make things worse the day after the shortlist was presented the country went into lockdown for Covid-19.

The Solution / What went well

Enigma's concern was that the title Head of Operations would attract too corporate a type of candidate and this would not match the agile change and journey that EDiNA as an SME is embarking upon.

A simple renaming of the role for advertising and initial attraction to Software Development Manager allowed us to home in on people at the right point of their career. Once the right people were attracted and identified the opportunity to sell the expanded version of the vacancy was taken through our "deep screening call" to allow the role to capture the imagination.

As EDiNA was a new client and it was important to demonstrate through the shortlisting that Enigma "got it", that we really understood the role and the challenges as outlined by the management team at EDiNA and that we had presented candidates that matched their view of the brief. All 4 people that Enigma shortlisted and presented were invited to interview by EDiNA. 100 % conversion of shortlisted CV's to interview was excellent and even more satisfying was that all 4 were progressed to 2nd interview. A final 2 were selected and there was a very close decision as both were excellent and capable candidates for the role.



The management team within EDiNA really walked the walk, they demonstrated that this role was important to them and prioritised the process even as the country was entering a lockdown due to Covid-19. They committed to the process via video calls making themselves available to busy candidates conducting interviews early morning and late evening, even whilst on holiday, which helped keep the process running smoothly for all candidates.

Conducting the whole process; advertising, response handling, research, search, selection, approaching and pre-screening, managing 3 interview stages via phone and video, managing candidate feedback, handling offer expectations, negotiation and closing, follow up, reference contacts, ultimate start date and handover to the client was time consuming and involved but was managed and performed to the extent that all candidates involved and the client experienced the very best of service.

Keith Copeland—“I wish to state that this process of interviewing with you has been smoother than I ever imagined. From the moment we got in contact around the position through what I would have expected to be a slowdown with the Covid-19 process, you really made sure I was informed with every step.”



We recognise that online interviewing is not suited to all types of roles but in this instance was perfectly suited to this role. This does show that companies can recruit and manage processes online although this is far from the ideal process. In fact, the successful candidate has started the role remotely/working from home in keeping with the lockdown restrictions in place due to Covid-19.

Keys to success

1. Time spent detailing the brief and willingness of client to work with the recruitment partner
2. Range of attraction and sourcing techniques employed and aligning the vacancy to attract the right level of candidate.
3. Deep screening work to ensure the accuracy of the shortlist 4 candidates selected from 78 prospects
4. Care and attention, delivery of service by the agency.

Key Numbers

78 prospects put into candidate pool to contact/approach

4 prospects shortlisted and submitted to client

100% of the shortlist invited to interview by the client (Enigma typically see 87% accuracy of CV's to clients converting to requests for interview).

100% of shortlist invited to 2nd stage interview

50% of shortlisted to final interview.

We believe this demonstrates how well Enigma People Solutions search and selection process efficiently finds you the technical leaders you need!



Interested in working with
us?

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